

SOUTHWELL COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

News from Southwell Archaeology

Mysterious Masonry in Southwell Gardens

By Peter Kent and published in the latest Minster "Leaves" magazine

Mysterious Masonry in Southwell Gardens

Architectural fragments and elaborately carved stones are commonly found in the private gardens of the houses surrounding any cathedral or great church. Southwell is no exception. For example, the lawn in the garden behind Norwell Overhall Prebend is edged with the most magnificently carved stones the origin of which is a mystery. Not surprisingly, the Residence garden provides a wealth of examples and a team from Southwell Community Archaeology Group have investigated many of them and in some cases have been able to provide an understanding of their stories. How did so many of them come to be in the Dean's garden making up edging for borders and retaining walls for changes of level?



Architectural stones edging the lawn at Norwell Overhall Prebend



In the photograph of the Dean's garden above many architectural fragments from a wide range of periods can be seen to have been used for this one structure. Towards the left is part of a Roman capital and in the centre a capital stone from the twelfth century most probably re-used in the thirteenth century. The large round stone on the upper right is a part of a pinnacle now known to come from the Minster round about 1880.

The present-day pepper pots on the west towers of the Minster were only constructed in about 1880. The original spires had been replaced by flat roofs with carved stone finials, illustrated in the reconstruction below, at the corners and remained so through most of the nineteenth century. We must assume that the finials were dismantled when the current pepper pots were installed and the stones transported to the Residence to be used as garden ornaments.



Similar pinnacle on the central tower today

North-west tower c 1850



Shaft fragments in garden

Architectural stonework - Norwell Overhall

The team working on the stone work in the garden of Norwell Overhall were really busy during the project and Adrian Wright has produced amazing drawings out of this great effort. These will be posted on our website in the Architectural Stonework page.

We are working towards a full report of the project but need to finish recording all the finds; 2021 awaits!

OUR NEXT TALK:

Professor Philip Dixon speaking on the buildings of early Christianity.

Thursday December 17th, 7 pm, on Zoom.

The link to this meeting has already been emailed out. Please let Steve know on contact@southwellarchaeology.org if you do not have this link.

OUR PREVIOUS TALK:

Emily Gillott gave a very interesting presentation on landscape archaeology with particular reference to 'reading' Nottingham examples. This talk is available to listen to on www.southwellarchaeology.org

REMINDER:

We have a subscription holiday. The subs that are normally due in January will now be renewed on May 1st.

FINALLY:

Despite the on-going difficulties caused by the public health situation, the trustees and management committee continue to meet (via zoom) and are looking positively to plan future activities. After Christmas we will be asking members what you are interested in learning more about, or contributing to, and using your ideas to help form a longer term strategy for the group.

In the meantime, we wish you a **HAPPY CHRISTMAS** and best wishes for a safe, healthy and more flourishing 2021!

LANDSCAPE PROJECT.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

You may remember from November's newsletter that Steph wrote about the on-going landscape project.

The historic Landscape Project is a group of people in SCAG who look at the land around Southwell and try to understand how it came to look as it does, and what used to happen in those places. As in other types of archaeology, there are often traces left behind to give us clues as to what was going on many years ago, many hundreds of years ago, and sometimes many thousand of years ago. The research is desk based and uses on-line resources. The group are enjoying their work and learning a lot.

More members are very welcome to join this project. No prior experience is required and you will be working in pairs or small groups from your computer. There are regular get togethers for the whole project team on zoom so that you can share progress. Expert guidance is provided by Emily Gillott, Community County Archaeologist.

If you are interested please contact Steph at: plattsstephanie@gmail.com

CHEDWORTH ROMAN MOSAIC -5th CENTURY?

There is an interesting article on the National Trust website about an unexpected finding at Chedworth Roman villa site. Radio carbon dating suggests that the floor was created around the mid- 5th century. "Up until now, it has generally been believed that, following the economic crash at the end of the 4th century, all towns and villas were largely abandoned and fell into decay within a few years" (National Trust).

There is an interesting article and short 'fly through' video to be found at: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chedworth-roman-villa/features/britains-first-known-5th-century-mosaic-found-at-chedworth-roman-villa>
